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THE STUDY FOR THE PLANNING OF
VICTIM ASSISTANCE SERVICES ON
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND: SUMMARY
REPORT FOR THE P.E.I. COMMITTEE
ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE

NO. 1984-34

Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada

Secretariat

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I

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the major findings and recommendations of the 'Study for the Planning of Victim Assistance Services on P.E.I.' The principal audiences for whom this report was prepared are the members of the P.E.I. Committee on Victim Assistance, and other members of the criminal justice and social service communities on the Island. A more detailed report on this study has also been prepared for a wider readership.

In April of 1983, the Ministry of the Solicitor General commissioned the 'Study for the Planning of Victim Assistance Services on P.E.I.' The research was performed in two distinct phases: in Phase I, a methodology proposal was developed and presented for approval to the project steering committee; in Phase II, the data collection activities described in the proposal were performed. This report summarizes the findings of the study and offers recommendations for improving the treatment of crime victims on P.E.I..

The conduct of this study was guided by both the Research Division of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the P.E.I. Committee on Victim Assistance (P.E.I.C.V.A.). P.E.I.C.V.A. membership included representatives of the R.C.M.P., the P.E.I. Department of Justice, the P.E.I. Department of Health and Social Services, Provincial Court (both Judges and Crown Prosecutors), the Transition House Association, the P.E.I. Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, the Federation of P.E.I. Municipalities, the Justice Resource Service and the Consultation Centre (Solicitor General).

The research methodology was designed with two objectives in mind. The first was to ensure that decisions on the kinds of services to implement (if any) would be based on sound information about which services are most needed. The second objective was to provide some of the information needed if the

effectiveness of possible future initiatives is to be evaluated. In responding to these two broad objectives, the methodology development focussed on providing answers to eight general planning questions (listed in the table below).

Planning questions addressed

Planning Questions

1. What are the immediate impacts of crime on victims on P.E.I. (trauma, injury, financial losses)?
 2. What are the longer term impacts of crime on victims on P.E.I. (lasting emotional effects and injuries, net financial losses)?
 3. What are the victims' expressed needs for services immediately after the crime?
 4. What are the victims' expressed needs for services six months after the crime?
 5. What is the level of awareness/use among victims of services available on P.E.I.?
 6. What are the impacts on victims of the way the police/courts currently deal with crime victims?
 7. What services are currently available to crime victims on P.E.I.?
 8. What approaches to providing services to crime victims on P.E.I. are more feasible than others?
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II

METHODOLOGY

We gathered six different types of information to support our planning and evaluation objectives. The resulting data sets consisted of survey completions with samples of victims and witnesses, an inventory of relevant services available on P.E.I., baseline measures of a number of criminal justice system indicators, and information obtained in interviews with local officials. The approaches used to gather these data were as follows:

A. VICTIM INTERVIEWS

Survey questionnaires suitable for administration by telephone were developed for both general crime victims and victims of wife assault. For each of these two groups, one questionnaire was designed to collect data within a week or so of the crime being reported. A second set of two questionnaires was also developed for a six-month follow-up survey of all victims completing the first survey. The objective in attempting two contacts with these individuals was to measure both the immediate and longer-term impacts of the crime, and corresponding victim needs.

The victims of general crime to be interviewed were identified from Occurrence Reports received by all eleven police jurisdictions on the Island in June and July of 1983. Reported incidents were classified into one of five categories:

1. Threat and/or attack events, e.g. assaults.

2. Property loss and/or damage events, e.g. theft.
3. Combined 1 and 2 above, e.g. robbery.
4. Regulatory events, e.g. drunk driving.
5. Incomplete events.

Victims of type 1, 2 and 3 events were eligible for inclusion in our survey sample. Commercial and institutional victims (e.g. stores and schools) were surveyed separately by mail (see below). Individuals under the age of 16 were excluded.

First survey interviews were completed with 184 victims, of whom 40 were victims of threat/attack crimes, and 144 were victims of loss/damage crime. The 40 threat/attack victims (including 10 victims of combined threat/attack and loss/damage offenses) represented an 80% sample of victims of this crime type reported during the study period. The 144 loss/damage victims interviewed were a randomly-selected 40% (approximately) of all victims of this crime type reported during the study period. The completion rate achieved on these first interviews of general victims was 80%. Only six victims contacted refused to participate in the study.

Second survey interviews (the six-month follow-up) were completed with 149 out of a possible 184 victims for a completion rate of 81%. The most frequent reason for non-completion of these interviews was our inability to contact the victim at the telephone number on file. A check was made of the extent to which the general composition of the first and second survey samples were comparable. The results of these tests gave no indication that the attrition in our sample was systematically related to offense type or victim demographics.

Our target for the interviews of wife assault victims was to complete 50 'first' interviews and as many follow-ups as possible (from among the first survey completions). Potential interviewees were identified both from police

occurrence reports, and via referrals from Anderson House. Our completion rate for the police-referred victims was 42% (11 completions from among 26 identified victims). The primary reason for non-completion was the lack of a current telephone number. The completion rate achieved for the Anderson House referrals was 88% (23 of 26). Due to the sensitive nature of the interviews, the victims were given a choice of telephone or personal interviews. Overall, sixteen were interviewed by telephone, while eighteen were interviewed in person. As well, six month follow-up interviews were conducted with six of the eleven police-referred victims to assess longer-term impacts and needs. No such interviews were attempted with the Anderson House referrals because the incidents in question occurred at various times throughout 1983, and many of these victims reported multiple assaults in that period.

B. WITNESS INTERVIEWS

A survey questionnaire suitable for administration by telephone was developed to gather information on the experiences and perceptions of civilian Crown witnesses subpoenaed to appear in Provincial Court on P.E.I.. The witnesses to be interviewed were identified from Court records of all cases involving Criminal Code offenses (other than impaired driving) in 1983.

The initial sample frame consisted of 91 witnesses for whom telephone numbers were available. Of these, we were able to complete interviews with 81 for a completion rate of 89%. The majority of the non-completions were due to the 'age' of the files -- many of the addresses and phone numbers on the court files were no longer current. Only four of the witnesses contacted refused to be interviewed.

C. THE COMMERCIAL/INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY

A sample of 100 commercial/institutional victims was identified from the Victim Information Forms completed by the police for the six week period from June 1 to July 15. A brief survey form was mailed to the individual identified as the complainant or contact on the police reports. The survey form concentrated on the financial impacts of the reported crimes, and included questions on the victims' views of the services provided to them by the police and courts. A copy of this questionnaire is included in Volume II of our report. Use of reminder letters and a telephone survey of non-respondents produced 71 completions for a response rate of 71%.

D. THE AGENCY INVENTORY

In order to develop a rational plan for victim services on P.E.I. we attempted to identify not only those services needed by crime victims, but also the extent to which such services are already being provided for other client populations in the area. To do this, we conducted telephone interviews with representatives of agencies providing relevant services to residents of P.E.I. (Exhibit II-1 provides a list of the agencies contacted.) The interviewees were asked about the types of services they provide, their client eligibility criteria, the extent to which they serve crime victims, the geographical coverage of their agencies, and a number of other questions (see list in Volume II of the detailed report). Following the telephone contacts, the agencies were sent copies of their descriptions for verification.

E. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INDICATORS

We included measurement of a number of indicators of system functioning in this study for two main reasons. Firstly, it was and is our belief that in these

Exhibit II-1 List of agencies included in inventory

Sign of the FISH Movement
Family Services, Salvation Army
Anderson House (Transition House Association)
P.E.I. Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre
Child Abuse Line (Department of Health and Social Services)
Addiction Services (Queens, Prince and Kings Counties)
Homes for Special Care (Department of Health and Social Services)
Field Services Division (Department of Health and Social Services)
Crown Attorney, Director of Prosecutions
Family Legal Aid Division (P.E.I. Legal Aid)
Family Court Division, Supreme Court of P.E.I.
Probation Services Division (Department of Justice)
Community Mental Health Services (Department of Health and Social Services)
Catholic Family Service Bureau
Protestant Family Service Bureau
Prince County Family Service Bureau
McDonald's Family Counselling, Inc.
Teen Health Information Service (Department of Health and Social Services)
Division of Nursing (Department of Health and Social Services)
Division of Services for the Aging (Department of Health and Social Services)
Women's Employment Development Programme
Canadian Mental Health Association
Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded
Postal Alert
Y Preschooler Programme

times of fiscal restraint, it is imperative to be able to document the cost-effectiveness of new programs. Measurement of these indicators prior to program implementation will provide the necessary baseline for future identification of program impacts. Even if direct cost savings are not produced by whatever services are ultimately put in place, at least we should know the costs of these services as fully as possible. And if system efficiencies are achieved and documented, so much the better.

The second potential contribution to be made by the system functioning measures was in pointing to aspects of the way the system treats victims which could be improved. For example, knowing that victims' property is typically held as evidence for several months when a signed photograph would serve as well might suggest policy changes which would not only benefit victims directly, but also reduce the need for storage space and staff in detachment offices.

Exhibit II-2 presents the list of system indicators on which data were gathered along with the source and rationale for each measure.

F. INTERVIEWS WITH KEY OFFICIALS

Interviewees included police and court personnel, and social service agency staff. The characteristics which these people possessed in common relevant to the present project were knowledge of local conditions and resources, and an awareness of what might in the future limit the feasibility of new services. By approaching them for their ideas on potential changes in justice system procedures, and by informing them of our objectives and activities we hoped to maximize the cost-effectiveness and ensure the feasibility of the approaches to victim services recommended in Chapter III of this report.

Exhibit II-2 Criminal justice system indicators

Measure	Source	Rationale
<u>Police Related</u>		
1. Proportion of reported crimes cleared by charge	Statistics Canada	The thinking here is that if victims receive more compassionate, responsive treatment from the system (meaning the police initially) then they will co-operate more fully with the investigation of the crime, the identification of the crime, the identification of suspects and the laying of charges. Logically, this should result in an increase in cases leading to charges for those victims who see themselves as having been treated well by the system.
2. Length of time victim property retained as evidence	Manual recording from exhibit log for high volume jurisdictions only (Charlottetown Municipal and R.C.M.P., plus Summerside Municipal)	Included among possible approaches which would benefit the victims by minimizing the length of time their property is held are: use of signed photographs as evidence in lieu of the actual object, and streamlining of the return system to ensure that the property owner is notified of its availability as soon as it is no longer needed in court.
3. Frequency of call backs to same residence for wife assault complaints	Manual recording from records in Charlottetown and Summerside Municipal Police offices, plus Charlottetown, Sherwood Parkdale, Alberton and Montague RCMP offices	A troublesome problem in many police jurisdictions is the chronic family violence situation (meaning wife-beating typically). It is conceivable that future assistance programs may involve some new approaches to this problem such as more active encouragement of charging, or of referring battered women to needed support services. Such approaches would logically be expected to result in decreased numbers of repeat calls to these residences for these types of problems. Monitoring of these incidents on a monthly basis should enable us to track any decreases in these calls once the program has begun.

Exhibit II-2 Criminal justice system indicators (continued)

Measure	Source	Rationale
<u>Court Related</u>		
4. Proportion of family violence cases in which charges laid by victim	Crown Prosecutor and Police Records	Active encouragement of battered wives to charge their assailants could be a component of a victim assistance program. Such an effort should lead to an increase in the proportion of these cases in which charges are laid.
5. Proportion of cases in which charges are withdrawn by victim	Crown Prosecutor and Police records	Any victim service which gives the victim a sense of being well-treated by the system should logically improve the extent of victim co-operation in the system's functions, including prosecution. What we would be looking for in this measure would be a decrease in the proportion of cases in which the victims sought and achieved withdrawal of the charges. We would also want to note the stated reasons for the withdrawal (if any).
6. Proportion of cases withdrawn due to victim non-attendance	Crown Prosecutor and Police records	As per 5 above, except that here the victim simply failed to appear as required. In practice it may be difficult to distinguish cases falling under this category and those falling into 5.
7. Proportion of cases in which suspect convicted	Data collected for P.E.I. Sentencing Study (Dept. of Justice)	As with 1, 5, and 6 above, victim services should logically improve victim co-operation with the judicial process leading ultimately to sounder evidence and improved prospects of conviction.
8. Proportion of convictions in which restorative sanctions imposed	Data collected for P.E.I. Sentencing Study (Dept. of Justice)	A potential component of a victim assistance program could be the promotion of the use of restorative sanctions to benefit victims.

III

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the remainder of this report, we summarize our major findings, discuss their implications, and offer recommendations based on these analyses. Separate sections are devoted to each of the 'populations' formally surveyed: general victims, wife assault victims, commercial/institutional victims, and subpoenaed Crown witnesses. Relevant information from the agency inventory and from the informal interviews with criminal justice and social service personnel is interspersed throughout this chapter as appropriate.

In order to place the substance of this chapter in the proper context, the inherent limitations of the methodology employed in this study should be acknowledged. The major constraint on the generality of our findings derives from the fact that we only contacted individuals whose victimization was reported to the police. Victimization survey results based on random sampling of households indicate that (across crime types) something less than half of all crimes are ever reported to the police (Canadian Urban Victimization Survey, 1983). By starting from police records, the present study has excluded 'non-reporters' from the survey samples. The other major feature of our methodology which limits the breadth of the findings concerns the highly structured nature of the survey instruments. The major advantages of a structured approach are the consistency and reliability of the results it produces. The major drawback is that it does not allow for extensive probing by the interviewers, and does not permit the interviewees to express all of their thoughts and feelings about the incident in an open-ended manner. Data acquired through unstructured interviews, while 'in-depth' and 'colourful' are difficult to collate into general patterns and findings. On balance, the structured approach adopted for this study has served its purpose well. We were also able to interview only four victims of sexual offenses. A sample of this size is too small to support a separate analysis.

Consequently, the data for these individuals was included in the sample of other threat/attack victims. Finally, readers are reminded that no interviews were conducted with any victims younger than 16 years of age. Consequently, this study can provide no information on children as victims of crime.

A. GENERAL VICTIMS

Overall, the general surveys conducted for this report do not indicate that the current procedures and services of the criminal justice and social service systems on P.E.I. are leaving important needs of crime victims unmet. This view is supported by the victims interviewed, 95% of whom reported that they would be willing to report (similar) crimes to the police in the future, while 98% stated that they would encourage a friend or family to report to the police if they were victimized. These responses clearly reflect a positive orientation by P.E.I.'s crime victims towards (in particular) the police. At the same time, a number of areas of potential improvement were identified in the course of the research. Recommendations as to how such improvements might be achieved are interspersed as appropriate throughout the following presentation and discussion of the findings of the general surveys.

1. Property loss and/or damage

Generally speaking, the actual value of most property stolen and/or damaged was low. The items most commonly reported stolen were motor vehicles, parts and accessories, bicycles, and other items of personal property. The reported average values of these losses were, for each type of item: cash (\$232), motor vehicles, parts and accessories (\$3,474), bicycles (\$158), and other personal property (\$247). Property damage was reported by 70 of the 184 (38%) respondents to the first survey. Of these cases, 47% involved damage to motor vehicles and 36% involved damage to the dwellings or other property of the

victims. The average value of damage reported in the second survey was \$288. These averages should be interpreted with caution as, in some cases, they are based on relatively few observations.

Of the loss/damage victims interviewed, 55% reported that they were covered by insurance prior to the crime. Of these, 60% filed and were able to claim successfully. So for these people, aside from the inconvenience of filing a claim and of having to (typically) pay some deductible amount, the monetary impact of their victimization was relatively minor. For those who did not have insurance coverage however, the losses would necessarily be greater. (Surprisingly, having insurance coverage was not related to income in our sample.) The only recourse available to these (uninsured) individuals was to seek restitution from the offender in the event that he/she was apprehended and convicted. Of the victims interviewed, the great majority (78%) supported the concept of restitution. Unfortunately, only a very small proportion of property crimes result in a conviction. For those that do however, recovery of at least part of the victims' losses through restitution should be encouraged. It is incumbent upon both the police and court personnel to both inform victims of their right to seek restitution, and of the procedures involved in doing so.

Recommendation 1. Restitution should be part of the sentences imposed in cases of property loss/damage whenever possible. Measures should also be followed to ensure that restitution orders are enforced.

Of the property loss victims interviewed, one in three (31%) reported that at least some of their property was recovered. In some cases, this property was held by the police as evidence. Examination of police records indicated that the average length of time that property was held is approximately two months. An alternative to holding the property is available: subject to the approval of the Crown Prosecutor, a photograph of the items can be taken and signed by the item's owner. He is then permitted to take the item home, and the photograph is used in court instead of the item itself. Hence the owner does not have to wait until the trial concludes to recover his property. We are informed that use of photographs in lieu of the physical evidence is rare in P.E.I. courts.

Recommendation 2. The practice of photographing recovered property and returning it to its owner should be employed in all applicable cases where the ownership of the item is clear, and where the photograph will serve adequately as evidence.

2. Physical injuries

The criminal victimization of P.E.I. residents only rarely results in serious physical injury. Of the 40 threat/attack victims interviewed, 19 (48%) reported being injured. Of those injured, 53% required medical attention (predominantly emergency treatment). These figures are relatively high compared to other studies. Even so, the extent of serious injury is not great.

Although the incidence of serious injury is low, implications of such injuries could be severe, e.g. loss of wages, pain and suffering, or even permanent disability. In most other provinces, claims for such losses can be made to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board which may, after investigation of the claim, award compensation to the victim (or to the victim's guardian or survivor, depending on the circumstances).

Recommendation 3. Consideration should be given to the possibility of establishing a means on P.E.I. to provide compensation for injured crime victims.

3. Emotional reactions

The respondents to the general surveys were interviewed on two separate occasions: a week or so after the crime, and six months later. The most frequent emotional reaction to the crime on both surveys was anger (21% for the second survey) followed by various expressions of nervousness or fear (15% for the second survey). Only 8% of the victims interviewed reported no emotional reaction whatsoever.

Surveys conducted in several major Canadian cities have reported compatible results to these with respect to 'nervousness' but have not

encountered anger as the first emotion mentioned. It may be that the relatively minor nature of many of the crimes in our sample did not provoke the kinds of stronger fear reactions reported elsewhere for more serious and violent types of crime.

4. Immediate service needs

The findings of this study with respect to the needs for service expressed by crime victims are very consistent with those reported for other locations. Exhibit III-1 presents a breakdown of the immediate service needs reported along with data on the proportions of those in need who received help, and from whom. The victims interviewed on P.E.I. identified two general areas of need: one having to do with obtaining emotional support, the other relating to the victims' contacts with the police. (As with the emotional reactions discussed above, it may be that the relatively minor nature of the majority of the crimes examined in this study did not generate extensive needs for emergency/crisis services.) With respect to expressed needs for emotional support, almost all of the victims reporting such a need (87%) indicated that they were able to seek and obtain help from their families and friends. These types of support were 'helpful' for two out of three of these individuals. Clearly, the majority of victims needing immediate emotional support are able to obtain such help from those close to them. This leaves a number of victims however who, for whatever reason, are not so fortunate. For these people, a viable option might be to contact any one of the numerous agencies on P.E.I. which offer counselling services for a range of types of problems. If information on these services was made available to both victims (and, where appropriate, their families) then those in need could seek outside help when their families and friends were unable to help. The first step would, however, be to increase awareness of these services among police officers (see discussion below).

Aside from emotional support, the victims interviewed reported needs for better communication of information by the police. Included in these information needs are: information on the status of their cases (23%), and information on crime prevention (8%). Current police policy calls for all victims to be contacted at some point regarding their cases. As a practical matter,

Exhibit III-1 Immediate needs for service

Type of service	Per cent expressing need	Of those expressing need, per cent receiving service	Major source of service
Emergency home repairs	1*	(50)***	friends
Emergency transportation to hospital	2**	(100)	police/friends
Emergency financial aid	1	(50)	friends
Advice on practical matters	3*	(60)	police/family
Someone to stay for security	9**	69	family/friends
Someone to talk to after police left	16**	87	family/friends
Advice on help available from social agencies	2**	0	—
Greater police concern for their troubles	12*	0	—
More police attention to their cases	15**	4	police
Case progress information	23*	12	police
Crime prevention information	8*	14	police

* Predominantly loss/damage victims.

** Predominantly threat/attack victims (especially female).

*** The percentages in brackets should be interpreted with caution as they are based on very few cases.

however, this does not always occur: the officers do not have time to contact everyone, and some matters are so minor that they do not warrant (either from the police or the victim's perspective) any further communication. It should be possible, however, for those victims who desire more information to get it. One way to streamline and improve the communication of case progress information would be to provide all victims with a card on which the Occurrence Number is recorded by the attending officer. Victims who wished to do so could then contact their local police office and request an update on their case using the Occurrence Number to identify both themselves and the case. For RCMP offices, data on the Police Information Retrieval System (P.I.R.S.) could then be accessed (when P.I.R.S. becomes fully operational), and the victim's questions would either be answered directly or passed on to the member involved. Such a system would also make it easier for victims to provide any new information they may have to aid the investigation of their crimes.

Recommendation 4. Case progress information should be made available to crime victims by means of the officer at the scene providing them with the Occurrence Number of the incident. Victims could then, at their discretion, contact their local police about their case. In this way, victims with a demonstrable interest in receiving case progress information would be self-identifying, as opposed to the present policy (not applied) of the police contacting everyone. This does not mean that no proactive contacts with identified victims should be made by the police. Clearly, in cases where the file is either 'concluded to Court' or 'concluded to file', the victims (if any) should be informed as promptly as possible. The only exception to this would be cases of property loss/damage reported for 'information or insurance purposes' only. Police policy in this area should be clearly defined and communicated.

5. Long-term service needs

Exhibit III-2 summarizes the victims' indicated needs for longer-term services.

Exhibit III-2 Long-term Needs for Service

Type of service	Per cent expressing need	Of those expressing need, per cent receiving service	Major source of service
Counselling	5**	(56)***	friends/social agency
Transportation to court	3**	(50)	family/friends
Case status information	13	60	police
Day care for children	1	(100)	friends
Compensation for medical costs	1	(0)	-
Compensation for income loss	1	(100)	insurance
Compensation for stolen property	15*	74	insurance
Personal protection	4**	50	police/social agency
Legal assistance	2	(100)	police/social agency
Security information	2	(100)	police/friends
Relocation assistance	3	(100)	social agency
Information & referrals	2	(100)	social agency/ police
Assistance in dealing with police, courts or social services	1**	(50)	police

* Predominantly loss/damage victims.

** Predominantly threat/attack victims (especially female).

*** The percentages in brackets should be interpreted with caution as they are based on very few cases.

Respondents to the six-month follow-up survey identified two main areas of service need: more case status information (13%), and financial compensation for property losses (15%). Of those reporting a need for more case status information, 60% were able to get the required information from the police. For the rest, a system such as that described above (see Recommendation 3) might have helped. Of those reporting a need for financial compensation, 74% received some assistance, typically from insurance. Some of those not helped by insurance might have been eligible for restitution (see Recommendation 1).

6. Perceptions of police

The overall level of victim satisfaction with the police response to their victimization was high. The only exception to this finding related to the provision of various kinds of information. Only 48% of the victims were kept informed of the progress of their cases (see Recommendation 3); only 20% of the victims were informed of available services by the police (see Recommendation 5); and only 52% of the victims interviewed were provided with crime prevention information. On balance, however, the victims were generally very positive in their assessments of the performance of the police.

7. Use of crime prevention measures

In spite of their frequent statements that the police did not provide them with crime prevention information, reported use by the victims of crime prevention measures following their victimization was extensive. Among the most often followed approaches were: locking doors/windows (49%); installing new locks/window bars (7%); leaving lights on when out (18%); protecting car (30%); having home checked while away (24%); and putting possessions in a safer place (40%). Clearly, these people are prepared to take various steps to prevent future victimization. Even limited input from the attending officer, or a suggestion that the victim contact their local police office would likely satisfy those seeking more information.

Recommendation 5. Victims of property offenses should always be offered crime prevention information by the attending officer, and should be made aware of the services provided by the local Crime Prevention Unit (if any).

8. Awareness of services

In the first survey, the victims were asked whether or not each of a range of services were available on P.E.I.. Overall, the results indicated that with the exception of Anderson House, the victims interviewed were not knowledgeable about available services. Our police interviewees suggested that this was not the case for police officers. If victims in need of help are to make contact with agencies providing the kind of help required, then they must first find out who to contact and how. Aside from general public information campaigns, the way that victims could most efficiently be referred to the appropriate agency would be if police officers had access to a directory of services. In this general regard, it became apparent from the contacts made with individual agencies that even within the social service community, knowledge of available services was incomplete.

Recommendation 6. A handbook of services available to crime victims on P.E.I. should be produced and distributed to all police officers who deal directly with crime victims. These individuals should familiarize themselves with the agencies listed so that when a victim would appear to be in need of one or more of the available services, the officer can and will make the appropriate referral(s). Provision should be made for an annual review and updating of the handbook.

B. THE SURVEYS OF ASSAULTED WIVES

Among the most controversial problems faced by the criminal justice system over the past several years has been that of how to deal with wife assault. In a report on wife battering published in May of 1982, the Commons Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs recommended changes in such diverse areas as: police training, funding for emergency shelters, legal administration treatment programs for batterers, and public education. These concerns were echoed in the Report of the Federal-Provincial task Force on Justice for Victims of Crime. In order to place the findings of the present study with respect to wife assault in context, the manner in which the needs of these people differ from the needs of other crime victims will first be highlighted.

The perceived distinction between wife assault and other types of crime is based on the view that wife assault is not a criminal matter. Rather, it is a private family matter which is best left to the family to resolve. Wife assault has not traditionally been seen as a problem requiring, or even suitable for intervention by the criminal justice system. One result of this has been the relative public invisibility of the problem — because it is a 'private matter', it does not come to the attention of those outside the family.

In addition to often not being perceived and treated as victims of crime, assaulted wives differ from victims of other crime types in that they:

- ▶ Are often subject to repeated and ongoing victimizations by their assailants;
- ▶ May require shelter and/or protection outside of their family homes;
- ▶ May require long-term financial assistance to support themselves and their children (if any);
- ▶ Often want treatment rather than punishment for their assailants, thus complicating the interaction between the victim and the justice system;

- May choose to maintain an ongoing, intimate relationship with their assailants despite their assailant's abusive behaviour.

A final distinction between assaulted wives and other types of victims is the possible effects of this crime on the children in the family. They may be abused themselves, and they may come to see violence as a normal part of family life which they may perpetuate as adults.

One additional aspect of our current understanding of wife assault which often sparks controversy is the lack of valid and reliable estimates of the incidence of this crime. The estimates range from one woman (married or in a live-in relationship) in ten over the course of a year (McLeod, 1980) to the seven per thousand figure derived from the recent National Urban Victimization Survey. Even allowing for differences in both counting methods and definitions, these two estimates are difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile.

It is against this background of uncertainty as to the number of cases we should expect "out there" that our findings are presented. Our experience on P.E.I. showed that we could not rely solely on police-referred cases for our sample. We therefore arranged for the staff of Anderson House to refer clients of theirs to us who were willing to be interviewed. Despite these extraordinary efforts, however, we completed interviews with 34 victims only, rather than our target number of 50. Based on these admittedly limited data, and on population figures from the 1981 Census, we developed estimates of the incidence of wife assault on P.E.I. These estimates ranged from 4.3 per thousand for four (largely rural) RCMP detachments to 27 per thousand for Charlottetown City.

In view of the uncertainty regarding numbers of (even) reported cases, it would be useful to develop a procedure for identifying and counting wife assaults on P.E.I. One possible method for doing this would be to have the officers on patrol record (on the Occurrence Report) the nature of the relationship between the 'combatants' in all domestic or family dispute cases. In coding these cases for Statistics Canada, the coders could flag these cases by assigning them a unique

numerical code. For RCMP purposes, PIRS could then be used on a periodic basis to retrieve and count these cases. In fact, RCMP detachments on P.E.I. have recently been asked to flag wife assault cases for statistical purposes and "L" Division is ready and waiting for a new national system of coding wife assault cases. It will be important in the future to extend this system to include the (non-RCMP) municipal police in order to produce as complete a picture of the problem as possible.

Recommendation 7. A system should be developed and implemented by all police on P.E.I. which will identify and count reported cases of wife assault. This should include occurrences reported "over the counter" such as cases of victims seeking recognizance orders or advice.

In the rest of this section, we present a summary of the results of the completed interviews with victims of wife assault, along with a discussion of their implications, and recommendations for alleviating some of the problems faced by these individuals.

1. The nature of the incidents reported

Of the wife assault victims completing the first survey, fifteen (44%) reported that they were only threatened verbally while seventeen (50%) were either punched, kicked or slapped. The remaining 2 (6%) cases involved child protection. The victims of physical attack required medical attention in 18% (three of seventeen) of the cases interviewed, all of whom required emergency treatment only (no overnight stays in hospital).

Alcohol abuse was a frequently reported factor precipitating wife assaults. Twenty of the 34 victims interviewed (59%) stated that their partners/ex-partners were drinking heavily at the time of the incident and an additional five indicated that their partner was in a stress period or "dry drunk"

at the time of the incident or that the abuse normally occurred when he was drinking. Thus, alcoholism was reported to be a factor in 25 of the 34 cases (74%).

Legislation which would have enabled the police on P.E.I. to remove people abusing alcohol from their houses and place them in treatment facilities was passed by the legislature in 1982, but not proclaimed. Given the extensive reported involvement of alcohol in the wife assault cases studied for this report, consideration should be given to reviewing this legislation.

Recommendation 8. This legislation should be reviewed by officials from the P.E.I. Department of Justice with a view to the protection of women and children when alcohol is abused by their partner in the home, while at the same time carefully studying the civil liberties/human rights issues involved, so that an amended version could possibly be considered for proclamation and enforcement.

2. Living arrangements

Victims were asked whether they were living with their assailant at the time of the incident, at the time of the first interview, and at the time of the second interview (if any). Of the 11 police-referred victims, only two (18%) were living with their assailants at the time of the incident; of these one left and stayed at Anderson House. Only one police-referred victim (of six contacted) was still living with her husband at the time of the second interview. Of the Anderson House-referrals, 21 of the 23 victims (91%) were living with their assailants at the time of the incident. Five of the 23 had returned to their own homes at the time of the first interview. (No second interviews were conducted with the Anderson House referrals.)

The difference in living arrangements between the police-referred and Anderson House-referred victims is striking. It appears that, despite their generally positive ratings of police service, wife assault victims living with their assailants are not likely to call the police for help.

3. Emotional reactions to the incident

For most of the wife assault victims interviewed, the reported incident was quite traumatic. Among the frequently reported reactions were: fear, anger, shaking and crying. As well, seven (21%) of the victims interviewed were physically sick or nauseous following the incident. Across the board, the extent (and type) of emotional reactions reported by the wife assault victims was more severe than that reported by the general victims surveyed. These findings emphasize the importance of providing an understanding and sensitive response to requests for assistance from these individuals.

Recommendation 9. A review should be undertaken to determine the causes of the apparent reluctance of wife assault victims living with their assailants to call the police. In addition, the adequacy of current police responses to wife assault complaints should be monitored to ensure that all reasonable efforts are being made to support and assist those victims.

4. Expressed needs for services

The most frequently expressed need (91% of the victims interviewed) was for professional help for their assailants. Such help can take the form of alcoholism treatment and/or counselling programs specifically for wife batterers. On P.E.I., treatment for alcoholism is provided by Addiction Services. A batterer's treatment program is scheduled to begin operation in March of 1984. Use of these services either as part of, or instead of legal sanctions may have the benefit of increasing reporting rates for wife assault since most victims do not want their assailant punished so much as they want the abuse to stop, and they want their assailant helped.

Recommendation 10. Police, social workers, addiction counsellors, doctors and other professionals who become aware of wife assault situations should be encouraged to make referrals to the group counselling programme for men who batter, planned to begin in March 1984. As well, judges should give serious consideration to this programme as a sentencing option (preceded as appropriate by alcoholism treatment) in wife assault cases.

Needs were also frequently expressed for someone to stay with the victims to provide company/security following the incident (76%), and for someone to talk to after the police left (62%). These two needs were met by family and friends in 95% and 81% of the relevant cases, respectively. Clearly, wife assault victims (like the general victims discussed above) are able to satisfy at least some of their need for counselling through their personal resources. Most of those requiring additional counselling sought it successfully from professional counsellors, social workers and/or the staff of Anderson House.

In terms of financial needs, over 80% of the victims who sought shelter outside their own homes reported their need for emergency financial assistance during the period immediately following the incident. All of these individuals were able to obtain funds from the Department of Health and Social Services. The most important practical need was for emergency shelter. Six of the 11 police-referred victims took shelter outside their home after the incident, even though only two of them had been living with their partner at the time. One of these two went to her neighbour's until the police arrived, then returned home, while the other went to Anderson House. The four who were seeking shelter from their ex-partners went to friends or relatives (one had stayed at Anderson House previously). The 23 Anderson House-referred victims all sought shelter at Anderson House, for a total of 29 of the 34 victims or 85% requiring emergency shelter.

Recommendation 11. The emergency shelter provided by Anderson House is clearly addressing one of the most crucial needs of wife assault victims

on P.E.I. Stable and adequate funding arrangements should be made so that the Transition House Association will be able to continue providing this valuable service, as well as addressing other needs such as follow-up support, outreach to the more distant communities and child care.

Transportation to a safe place to stay was needed by one of the police-referred victims and 13 of the Anderson House-referred victims or 41% in all. This transportation was provided by a variety of means: taxis, family friends, police, Social Services staff and Anderson House staff, except for one victim who walked seven miles to Anderson House and one whose father had to travel approximately 30 miles to the hospital late at night because the police wouldn't take her to Anderson House, although they had taken her to the hospital for emergency medical treatment. Lack of available transportation may well be a deterrent for victims from outside the Charlottetown area who would otherwise seek shelter at Anderson House; it seems that in some cases the police or Social Services will provide transportation to Anderson House and in some cases they will not, perhaps depending on the distance to be travelled.

Recommendation 12. Police and Social Services staff should together work out a satisfactory system of providing transportation to Anderson House for wife assault victims.

Two other practical needs expressed were for emergency home repairs in 15% of the cases (no such service was available) and for emergency child care in 15% of the cases (this was provided by Anderson House as needed).

Information needs

Information on legal procedures was needed by 25 of the 34 victims or 74%. Only 12 or 60% of these victims received the legal advice they needed, generally from Anderson House staff, the P.E.I. Legal Handbook for Battered Women (made available to them through Anderson House), and/or private lawyers. Seven victims sought help from Legal Aid, but did not get the help they

needed (only one victim did get satisfactory help from Legal Aid). Several victims reported a negative attitude on the part of Legal Aid lawyers.

P.E.I. Legal Aid has two components: the Public Defender and Family Legal Aid. These two components are potentially incompatible since, in wife assault cases, the victim may be seeking help from Family Legal Aid at the same time that her partner/ex-partner is seeking help from the Public Defender. As well, Family Legal Aid is notoriously understaffed, with a long waiting list of clients, and this may account to some extent for the negative attitude reported by some wife assault victims.

Recommendation 13. It is therefore recommended that the P.E.I. Department of Justice conduct a review of P.E.I. Legal Aid, with consideration being given to the needs of wife assault victims.

Other information needs of wife assault victims are related to police involvement in the case. Twenty-one victims contacted the police regarding the specific incident discussed in the interview and 11 or 52% of these expressed a need for information about progress of the case. Only six victims or 55% received this information from the police, including one who called the police herself and one who received the information second-hand, rather than directly from the police. Eight victims (38%) felt that they needed information on how to prevent further attacks; five or 63% obtained this information, four from the police and one from Anderson House staff.

Another indication of the need for more complete and clear information being provided by the police is that, when the victims were interviewed, most of them were confused about whether charges were being laid and who were laying these, or whether a recognizance order or restraining order was being sought.

Recommendation 14. Police need to ensure that the information they provide is complete and accurate and that it is understood by the victim. The handbook and brochure on assault charges, recognizance orders, and restraining

orders ("What Battered Women Should Know About The Law") should be of considerable assistance to police officers in this regard. It is recommended that police officers distribute these brochures to all wife assault victims and keep copies of the larger, more detailed handbook in each police office for reference by themselves and/or the wife assault victims. It is also recommended that police officers be more diligent in providing information to wife assault victims about the progress of the case.

5. Victims' perceptions of the police response

The eleven police-referred victims, the ten Anderson House-referred victims who contacted the police following this incident, and six Anderson House victims who had contacted the police following a previous incident within the past year or two were asked about their level of satisfaction with the way the police had handled their case.

Of these 27 victims, nine (33%) indicated they were very satisfied, 14 (52%) were satisfied, and four (15%) were not satisfied. Reasons for dissatisfaction were: (1) the officer just wanted to her to lay charges and wouldn't help her otherwise, even though she required medical treatment and stated she was too scared to lay charges herself; (2) the police wouldn't get involved in two cases; and (3) the officers just sat in their car while the victim tried to persuade her husband to go with them to the Alcoholism Treatment Centre. Three victims who were satisfied or very satisfied with the intervention of the Charlottetown Municipal Police at the time of the incident qualified this response by stating they were not satisfied with the level of assistance they received when they went to the office to write their statements about the incident.

The 27 victims were asked a series of questions about the way in which the police handled their case. Twenty-three of the 27 victims (85%) indicated that the officers were polite and courteous, 22 (81%) that the presence of the officers made them feel safe and secure, and 18 (67%) that the police responded quickly when called, but only six of the 27 (22%) indicated that the

police told them about services available to help with problems caused by the incident. Seven of the 27 victims (26%) indicated that the officers were not sympathetic to their situation, five (19%) that the officers made the victim feel partly responsible for the incident, and seven (26%) that they were not kept informed of what happened during the investigations of the incident. As well, an additional nine (33%) believed there was no investigation. This indicates a mixed response to the police intervention and suggests the need for improvements, particularly in providing information about needed services, as well as follow-up and information after the incident.

The issue of laying charges is complex in wife assault cases. Current policy calls for the police to lay charges in all cases where there is reasonable and probable grounds to believe that an assault has taken place. Our research determined that only 24% of family violence cases were cleared by charge in our sample of four RCMP jurisdictions over eight months. Of these charges, 60% were laid by the police, while 40% were laid by the victim. This compares to 78% of the charges being laid by the police and 22% by the victims for other assaults, meaning that the police were less likely to lay the charges themselves if the assault involved family members. The difference is even greater for those cases which went to court - 35% of the charges were laid by the police for wife assault cases versus 70% for other types of assaults. Despite the tendency to leave it up to the victim to lay the charges, a higher proportion of wife assaults than other assaults do go before the court (24% versus 14%).

To some extent, the reluctance of police officers to lay charges in wife assault cases may arise from the perception that the victim will be more likely to follow through if she lays the charges herself. Our research found the opposite to be true. Of the 25% of the wife assault charges withdrawn by the victims, all involved cases where the victims laid the charge. All of the charges laid by the police resulted in convictions (except for 2 cases where the assault charges were dropped by the Crown in favour of other charges).

Of the 34 cases studied, 22 (65%) did not involve the laying of charges. These victims were asked their main reason for not laying charges themselves. The most frequently mentioned reasons were fear of retaliation and the belief that their assailant was sick and needed help rather than to go to court. Fear of retaliation might be reduced by the police taking more responsibility for charging. However, as things currently stand, invoking the legal process is more likely to lead to punishment than treatment for the assailant.

So the police find themselves in a dilemma. On one hand, there is pressure to charge exerted by some victims, and by society at large. On the other hand, many victims are either unaware of, or do not want to pursue 'legal avenues' to their logical conclusions. Instead, they want the abuse to stop, and they want their assailants to receive professional help. In some cases, these two objectives will conflict. In recognition of this conflict, the following recommendations are offered:

Recommendation 15. Charges should be laid promptly by the police in all cases where sufficient evidence is present to substantiate the charges. Where evidence is lacking, the officer attending the call should inform the victim of both the process to be followed in laying charges herself, and of the availability of community resources to assist her.

A final factor which may contribute to police reluctance in laying charges is the uncertainty about what will happen when the case goes before the court. As the judges themselves pointed out, Provincial Court judges don't feel that they are able to deal adequately with the family violence problem due to time constraints, the Criminal Court setting, etc., while Family Court judges don't have the power to deal with wife assault (there is no provision under the Criminal Code for police to enforce the restraining order issued by Family Court).

Recommendation 16. It is recommended that the Provincial and Family Court and other appropriate personnel within the P.E.I. Department of Justice work towards a satisfactory solution - for instance a family court division of Provincial Court or some other mechanism that will allow the judges to deal effectively with wife assault.

C. THE SURVEYS OF SUBPOENAED CROWN WITNESSES

The philosophy underlying the development of the witness surveys differs somewhat from that followed in the case of the victim questionnaires. Rather than asking for respondent perceptions (typical of the victim surveys), the witness questionnaire documents 'what happened' to each respondent. One result of this approach is that the results are largely factual in nature, and do not require extensive interpretation. In the rest of this section, we summarize the major findings of the survey and offer two recommendations for improving the way subpoenaed Crown witnesses are dealt with on P.E.I.

1. Elapsed time between the crime and the conclusion of the trial

The average length of time between the date of the crime and the date on which the trial concluded was approximately five months. Overall, 74% of all trials involving (interviewed) witnesses were completed within six months of the occurrence of the crime.

2. Comprehension of subpoena

Over 98% of the witnesses interviewed reported that they understood their obligation to appear in court.

3. Legal advice sought by witnesses

Only 9% of the witnesses interviewed sought legal advice or assistance (most of these individuals were the victims of the crimes being tried). The most typical reason for making these contacts was to be better prepared for court.

4. Advance information on court procedures

Roughly one-third of the witnesses interviewed indicated that more information about court procedures would have been helpful to them. One straightforward solution to this problem would be to prepare and distribute (with the subpoena) a brochure outlining the witness' rights and responsibilities, and describing court procedures in general.

Recommendation 17. An information brochure for Crown witnesses should be prepared and distributed along with each witness' subpoena. This brochure should outline the rights and responsibilities of witnesses, and describe court procedures so that the witnesses will be better prepared for their court appearances.

5. Practical problems encountered by witnesses

Only 20% of the witnesses interviewed reported any problems in arranging for their court appearances. Those most often mentioned were: getting time off work/school and arranging transportation. Almost two-thirds of the survey respondents testified on the day they appeared, and spent half a day or less in court. Even so, 38% reported 'a long wait before appearing.'

6. Contact with the Crown Prosecutor

While 31% of the witnesses interviewed reported speaking to the Prosecutor before the trial, only 10% had any contact with the Crown following

the trial. In fact, roughly 7% did not know whether or not their trial had ever been completed. In view of the importance of witness cooperation to the functioning of the judicial system, some means of both informing witnesses about trial outcomes (including sentences) and thanking them for their time and trouble seems justified.

Recommendation 18. Following the conclusion of the trial (including sentencing, if any), each subpoenaed Crown witness should be sent a letter from the office of the Crown Prosecutor informing them of the outcome of the trial, and thanking them for their cooperation.

D. COMMERCIAL/INSTITUTIONAL VICTIMS

The response to our commercial/institutional mailout survey was very enthusiastic, as evidenced by our 71% response rate. Our findings indicate that theft and/or property damage are frequent problems for some establishments. Of the respondents to our survey, 61% reported being involved in at least one incident similar to the one covered in the survey over the past year. Over 10% had been involved in 30 or more incidents of a criminal nature in this time period. The majority (59%) expressed the belief that these incidents are increasing in frequency, while 41% also believe that they are increasing in severity. In the remainder of this section of our report, we present our survey data on the impacts of these incidents on their victims. We also present the expressed views of these individuals on the service provided to them by the police and courts. The general assessment is positive, particularly for the police. This attitude is summarized in the victims responses to the question "Do you think that you would report this type of incident to the police if it occurred in the future?" Of our respondents, 92% responded positively. Of the 7% of negative respondents, the typical reasons for this response were that the incident was too minor, or that there would be no point in reporting it.

As indicated previously, only property offenses were included in this survey. Of the survey respondents, 68% reported that some of their property was stolen, while 63% reported property damage (31% reported both). The value of property stolen was under \$100 for 25% of those reporting property loss, between \$100-\$500 for 37%, and over \$500 for an additional 32% of these respondents. The stolen property was replaced by 42% of the loss victims, while the property was recovered by another 8%. Among property damage victims, the breakdown of reported repair costs was: under \$100 - 32%, \$100-\$500 - 38%, over \$500 - 20%. Only 2% of damage victims did not repair or replace their damaged property.

Only a small proportion of these losses due to property theft and damage were covered by insurance -- 9% were fully or partially covered. A further 13% were insured but no claim was filed. The majority of these losses (59%) were not covered at all. It is apparent from these data that most commercial and institutional crime victims pay the costs of their victimization out of their own revenues.

As was the case with the victims of both general crime and family violence, the commercial/institutional victims were generally very positive in their assessments of police performance. Of the survey respondents, 83% reported that the police responded quickly, 96% found the officer(s) polite and courteous. The only areas in which police service was rated as less than satisfactory again concerned the availability of information. Only 53% of the survey respondents were kept informed on the progress of their investigation, while only 29% were given information on crime prevention.

Recommendation 5 (repeated). Victims of property offenses should always be offered crime prevention information by the attending officer, and should be made aware of the services provided by the local Crime Prevention Unit (if any).

Recommendation 6 (repeated). A handbook of services available to crime victims on P.E.I. should be produced and distributed to all police officers who deal directly with crime victims. These individuals should familiarize themselves with the agencies listed so that when a victim would appear to be in need of one or more of the available services, the officer can and will make the appropriate referral(s). Provision should be made for an annual review and updating of the handbook.

Suspects were identified in 47% of the cases surveyed. Charges were laid in two-thirds of these cases. Of the rest, reasons given for not laying charges were lack of evidence (33%), suspect not located (22%) informal restitution arranged (33%) and juvenile suspects (11%).

Of those cases where charges were laid, only 9% required the victims to attend court as a witness. The average time commitment required of these individuals was roughly three hours.

Those victims whose cases resulted in convictions were asked their opinions of the sentences imposed. The majority (69%) felt the sentences were "too lenient", while 23% felt they were "about right". None of these respondents believed that the sentences imposed were "too severe."

Our findings indicate that restitution was ordered in almost half of those cases resulting in convictions. However, only half of these orders were reported as being enforced.

Recommendation 1 (repeated). Restitution should be part of the sentences imposed in cases of property loss/damage whenever possible. Measures should also be followed to ensure that restitution orders are enforced.

Victim's property was recovered and held as evidence by the police in the cases of 14% of the survey respondents. The length of time this property was held varied from less than one month (11%), through 1-2 months (33%), and 3-4 months (33%) to more than 5 months (11%).

Recommendation 2 (repeated). The practice of photographing recovered property and returning it to its owner should be employed in all applicable cases where the ownership of the item is clear, and where the photograph will serve adequately as evidence.

Almost half of our survey respondents reported taking one or more crime prevention measures since the reported incident. These measures included upgrades to doors, windows and locks (17%), alarm installations (14%), changes to storage arrangements (17%), various procedural changes (46%) and improved surveillance of property (6%).

Finally, our respondents were asked for their opinions on how the police and courts could be more helpful in dealing with these types of incidents. With respect to the police, the most frequently offered opinions were that the police (a) should keep victims better informed on case progress and outcomes, (b) should increase patrols in problem areas, and (c) should lay charges more often. Overall, most victims were complimentary about, and supportive of the work done by the police.

It was the courts however, which came in for the bulk of the criticism from the victims surveyed. The most frequently offered opinions were that the courts (a) should impose stiffer penalties, (b) should increase the use of restitution, (c) should better enforce restitution orders, and (d) should make parents more responsible for the behaviour of their children.

E. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The orientation of this study from the outset has been to establish a rational basis for the planning of victim assistance services on P.E.I. In developing the recommendations presented thus far in this report, we have remained cognizant of the fact that resources for new services are either scarce

or unavailable. We believe that the findings of this research do not justify the establishment of new service agencies. Rather, the most cost-effective approach to meeting the identified needs of crime victims on P.E.I. is through improved integration and coordination of existing services, and through the changes in police and court procedures discussed previously.

Through an agency inventory, it was found that a wide variety of services of potential value to crime victims are available on the Island. Most of these services are not targetted specifically at crime victims, but are nevertheless available to them. Victim access to these services, however, is currently limited by the difficulty in identifying the appropriate agency to contact. Earlier in this report, we recommended that procedures be established whereby both the police and crime victims will have readily available information on available services. While this would be an important step, we also believe that some concrete effort at integrating and co-ordinating the service-providing agencies should be made.

We believe that the first step should be to establish some form of local co-ordinating mechanism to develop an integrated strategy for meeting victim needs on P.E.I.. There are many agencies which may be able to participate in this network. Someone, however, has to take the initiative to bring the various community groups together. Once the community resources were marshalled, and priorities for service set, it may be necessary to seek funding for some administrative support for the victim service network.

Recommendation 19. A working committee should be established to integrate and co-ordinate available community resources for the benefit of crime victims. Further, this committee should determine the resources necessary to maintain a viable and effective network of services to meet the needs of P.E.I.'s crime victims.

An innovative approach to solidifying the police role in a network of victims services is currently being tried out in Oxnard California. At its most basic level, this approach involves training of police officers in crisis intervention and stress management. The objectives of this training are to:

- ▶ Enable officers to demonstrate insight into the emotional conditions in which victims and witnesses are found.
- ▶ Assist the victim/witness in obtaining control over their emotional crisis.
- ▶ Obtain, as a result, the highest quality and most reliable information during the preliminary investigation, from the most valued sources -- the victims and witnesses.

An additional component of the training involves the provision of comprehensive information on other services available to help the police to deal with victims and witnesses.

We understand that the Solicitor General has some interest in attempting a limited field trial of this approach to victim services. Given its limited size, the extensive list of available services, and the closely knit nature of the Island community, P.E.I. would appear to be a good candidate as a test site. The fact that the Atlantic Police Academy is located in Charlottetown would also facilitate the delivery of the training.

Recommendation 20. Consideration should be given by the province to the possibility of acting as a pilot test site for a comprehensive training program for police officers aimed at increasing the quality and range of services offered to crime victims.

Finally, we believe that should any of the recommendations in this report be implemented, then the impacts of the new procedures/services should be monitored and evaluated. Ideally, this process would involve data collection both prior to and following any changes (unless pre-change data are already available).

Recommendation 21. The impacts of new procedures/services should be monitored and evaluated in terms of their effects on both victims, and the criminal justice and social service systems.